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FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL SCHOOLS

TO: Mayors, Selectmen, City/Town Managers, Regional School
Superintendents and Regional School Treasurers

FROM: Joseph J. Chessey, Jr., Deputy Commissioner
Division of Local Services

DATE: March 2002

SUBJECT: New Legislation on Regional School District Financial Officers and Audits

This *Bulletin* is to advise you of recent legislation that makes several important changes in the financial management of regional school districts. Ch. 6 of the Acts of 2002 amending G.L. Ch. 71 §16A. These changes become effective on April 17, 2002.

Financial Officers

Regional school business managers, or other persons who perform functions similar to municipal accounting officers, may no longer also serve as district treasurers or perform any functions involving the receipt or distribution of money. Business managers will now have the same statutory duties as municipal accounting officers under G.L. Ch. 41 §52 to review and approve all bills and payrolls before the treasurer can pay them. This includes the power to disapprove those found to be fraudulent, unlawful or excessive and the duty to file a written statement of the reasons for the disapproval with the treasurer, who cannot make payment.

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In addition, the regional school committee may now appoint the treasurer of any member municipality as district treasurer or assistant treasurer and anyone appointed to either position may be compensated for their services. Previously, a committee member serving in either position could not be compensated. Finally, anyone appointed to either position must meet the new minimum statutory qualifications of “ability and experience” for the position.

Financial Audit

Regional school committee will now have a duty to ensure the district has an annual financial audit. The committee must solicit proposals and contract with an independent certified public accountant to perform the audit and make management recommendations. It must also receive the audit report during a meeting open to the public and within 10 days, forward a copy of the audit to the Director of Accounts and the board of selectmen, city/town manager or mayor of each member municipality.